During the 10th Five Year Plan, an amount of Rs. 6.25 lakh was sanctioned by Ministry of Tourism, Government of India to Andaman and Nicobar Islands for tourism related activities. The Government of India had also allocated Rs.76.5 crore as additional Central Assistance under Tsunami Rehabilitation Programme for up-gradation of tourism in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands to be utilized in 3 consecutive years, *i.e.* 2006-07 to 2008-09.

Development of tourist circuit in Orissa

829. SHRIMATI RENUBALA PRADHAN:
SHRI B. J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to develop the holy city of Puri in Orissa as a mega tourist circuit;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also proposed to enhance security in and around the holy temple and adjoining sea beach; and

(d) if so, what is the action plan of the Centre to help the State Government both financially and physically for successful execution of this project?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (d) Development and promotion of tourism is undertaken primarily by the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations. The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, extends financial assistance to the State Governments/ Union Territory Administrations for tourism related infrastructure projects under the scheme of Product/Infrastructure Development of Destinations/Circuits which are identified in consultation and interaction with them and sanctioned subject to availability of funds and *inter-se priority*.

Ministry of Tourism, Government of India has sanctioned a project - Development of Bhubaneshwar - Puri - Chilika as a mega circuit for a total amount of Rs. 30.22 crore out of which an amount of Rs. 14.98 crore has been earmarked for development of Puri.

Instructions have been issued to State Governments/Union Territory Administrations to ensure law and order and security around important tourist destinations, hotels etc.

Special scheme for promoting tourism

830. SHRI A. ELAVARASAN: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has proposed any special scheme for promoting the tourism in the country which is affected due to recent terror activities in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the funds allocated for this purpose, State-wise; and

(c) if not, the reasons, therefor?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (c) The Ministry of Tourism has taken several initiatives for promoting tourism to the country after the recent terrorist attacks.

These include liberalizing the Marketing Development Assistance Scheme for tour operators promoting India, organizing Road Shows in important tourist generating markets overseas, arranging familiarisation tours to India for international travel trade and media representatives to keep them updated on safety / security conditions in the country, media campaigns in the print and electronic media and a "Visit India 2009" scheme, in collaboration with all stakeholders including airlines, hotels, tour operators, State Governments for incentivising travel to India during the period April to December 2009.

The expenditure involved is incurred by the Ministry from funds allocated for Overseas Promotion and Publicity, amounting to Rs. 220 crore, during the current financial year.

Development of Tourism Industry

831. DR. JANARDHAN WAGHMARE: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is seriously thinking to develop tourism as a throbbing industry; and

(b) if so, what are the plans or programmes undertaken to attract tourists from all over the world?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Development and promotion of tourism is primarily undertaken by the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations. However, the Ministry of Tourism provides financial assistance to States/Union Territories on the basis of project proposals received from them subject to availability of funds and *inter-se priority* under the following schemes:

1. Product/Infrastructure Development for Destinations and Circuits.
2. Assistance for Large Revenue Generating Projects.
3. Computerisation and Information Technology
4. Fairs, Festivals and Events.
5. Rural Tourism-Infrastructure and Capacity Building for Service Providers.

The Ministry of Tourism is also implementing the schemes of human resource development, market research, domestic and overseas promotion and publicity for this purpose. India Tourism Offices abroad also undertake promotional activities in important overseas markets for promoting India as an attractive destination. Assistance is also provided to tour operators / travel agents for sales-cum-study tours, participation in fairs and festivals in overseas markets and for production of publicity materials.

Shortage of hotel rooms for Commonwealth Games

832. SHRI N.K. SINGH: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the shortage of hotel rooms is a major deterrent in promoting tourism;